



After falling in love with a 1920s black-and-white tile in her foyer, a Michigan homeowner and her design team craft a sophisticated kitchen to match.

BLACK-TIE AFFAIR

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THIS PHOTO: "You absolutely can combine modern and traditional," says designer Lauren Tolles, who paired glossy surfaces and artful lighting with vintage-inspired glass-front cabinets in this renovated kitchen. OPPOSITE: Simple accessories bring a splash of color to the high contrast scheme.





The dramatic new bar and glass-front wine storage area link the kitchen to the dining room. "While the kitchen maintains a bright and airy feel, we envisioned the bar/butler's pantry to be a dark moment, a shift in mood," Tolles says.



THE WISH LIST WAS LONG WHEN

Harriet Lodholz decided to renovate the dated kitchen in her 1921 home. “Open, clean, and contemporary” topped the list but a well-functioning layout wasn’t far behind. “I wanted a practical space without upper cabinets and with minimal visible appliances,” Harriet says.

The old kitchen was closed off from neighboring rooms, with small windows that exacerbated the overcrowded feeling. A classic 1990s plan positioned both the cooktop and prep sink in the center island, limiting the usable counter space. Enter designer Lauren Tolles of Maison Birmingham, who worked with Harriet and architect Jamie Mertz to recast the kitchen through a modern-day lens.

Original wainscoting and a crisp black-and-white marble tile in the home’s front hall and foyer kick-started the plan, providing a timeless palette that connects the renovated areas—the main kitchen, a nearby butler’s pantry, and walk-in wine storage—with the rest of the home. “Harriet loved the contrast of dark against light,” Tolles says. “It was a great way to stay classic while introducing a fresh, modern element.”

Other homeowner requests included an open plan with space and seating that would accommodate in-kitchen dining with family as well as large-scale entertaining, a walk-in pantry, and a clean-lined design that encourages organization and keeps counters free of clutter. To accomplish this, Tolles created clearly

the plan



Hardworking auxiliary spaces, including a bar/butler’s pantry and walk-in wine storage, allow the primary working area of the kitchen to be a showplace, with plenty of room for friends and family. Hutchlike cabinets flank the pro-style range and keep everyday dishware close at hand.



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defined zones, including an island dedicated to food prep and a long counter along the sink wall for cleanup. A concealed bar/butler’s pantry, which houses the kitchen’s only full-size refrigerator, adds utility outside of the primary gathering areas. “The lack of tall appliances and upper cabinetry [in the kitchen] really does keep the space open and airy,” Tolles says.

Black glass-front cabinets flanking the chef-worthy range mimic built-in hutches for a subtle nod to the past. Set against bright white surfaces, the statement cabinets reference the home’s original checkerboard tile. Just beyond the kitchen, sleek glass-front wine storage makes a statement all its own, serving as a dramatic link between the kitchen and adjacent dining room.

Tolles enjoys taking cues from a home’s history. “What I love most about Harriet’s kitchen is that, while it has some modern styling, it still resonates with the original architectural character,” she says. “There is a large emphasis on symmetry and proportions. I feel like we stayed true to these ideals while incorporating a more modern aesthetic.”

Resources begin on page 100.



TOP LEFT: Centered on a long, cabinet-free exterior wall, the sink provides cleanup space near the range while remaining convenient to the nearby island. “I like to allow breathing space so the kitchen doesn’t feel heavy,” Tolles says. ABOVE: Sculptural wire lighting over the island adds task lighting with an airy, artistic flair.



LEFT: A classically styled range anchors the cooking area and serves as the kitchen's focal point. Brass knobs complement fixtures and hardware throughout the kitchen. The backsplash and island counters are made of a polished white micro glass.

DESIGNER INSIGHTS: STREAMLINED DESIGN

"What you don't see in this kitchen is as important as what you do," says designer Lauren Tolles, who cleverly concealed a host of hardworking elements to create a sleek look. She shares her foolproof methods.

- **Understand your needs.** Are you coffee or wine drinkers? Do you love to bake? Maybe a hidden bar or baking station is in order. Organizing your space by function means you'll never be scrambling to find your favorite mug or rolling pin again.
- **Maximize cabinetry.** Consider putting as much function as possible behind cabinetry. "Not having to stare at all the small appliances on the countertops is a luxury that everyone should have," Tolles says.
- **Rethink appliances.** This kitchen features four undercounter refrigerators and freezers. Appliances are also hidden in the bar/walk-in pantry, reducing the need for a bulky full-size refrigerator in the main cooking and gathering area.